

Rainier Beach Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)

MEETING SUMMARY

December 8, 2011 6:30 pm-8:30 pm

Southeast Seattle Senior Center (4655 South Holly Street, 98118)

Attendees

NAC Members:

Cheryl dos-Remedios, Christie Coxley, David Sauvion, Gregory Davis, Harry Hoffman, Katy Curtis, Mohamed Sheikh Hassan, Peter Masundire, Rudy Castillo, Trey West, Vallerie Fisher

Community Member: Katie Pencke', Sue Kennedy

Partners: Trang Tu, Mary Murray, Nanette Fok

City Staff: Nora Liu, (DPD), Sebhat Tenna (DON)

Announcements

- Rainier Beach Empowerment Coalition has partnered with SAGE and received a grant for young people to survey community around transportation issues in order to create a transportation plan. Surveying will begin in the new-year. Students are being trained and will graduate next week.
- With passage of Youth and Education Levy, small immigrant/refugee organizations are concerned city will contract only with large organizations. Would like to see more contracts with small, local organizations.
- Community Power Works will be expanding outside of SE Seattle. Will be focused on SE Seattle until the end of the year.

Update on Presentation of Plan Update *(Cheryl and David)*

- Would like to include Executive Summary to actualize the plan.
- Recommended structure would highlight "concepts". Want to move away from topics. For example, identify concept, then list assets:
 - concepts: growing food, growing community ...
 - Assets: Urban Farm, Rainier Beach Learning Garden ...
 - Goal: alternative food distribution system, celebration of cultures, job creation, partners, outcomes.
- Nora stated it is essential to make the document relevant for underrepresented populations as well. Cheryl stated the NAC will need more time to work on this document.

Project Update on Organizational Development & Community Capacity Building *(Trang Tu)*

- Focus has been on community organization model and how to build a foundation with funders. First of two meetings with NAC. Today's is to update on progress and report back. The second meeting will build on today's presentation and have a work session to begin crafting an organizational model.
 - Met with NAC subgroup for input in developing scope of work. Framed the research and community outreach around the idea of a coalition of organizations, but also left room for other ideas.
 - Spoke with three categories of groups that might play a direct role in implementation: 1) leadership of the Rainier Beach Community Empowerment Coalition (RBCEC), via a group meeting, 2) partners of the RBCEC,

via online survey, and 3) other groups and organizations who are either not partners of the RBCEC or who work with communities that have been traditionally underrepresented, via one-on-one conversations. Asked about neighborhood plan involvement and implementation, ideas about organizational structure for implementation, and potential role of Empowerment Coalition.

- What Consultants Learned About Rainier Beach: four main themes stood out -
 - All share genuine concern for and commitment to Rainier Beach.
 - Involvement and confidence in neighborhood plan process is varied.
 - There are many silos amongst the organizations and they would all like better connections.
 - There was a range of responses to what sort of organizational structure would be best for implementation; most say more structure is needed.

Regarding a potential role for the RBCEC, nearly everyone who is currently a partner who answered the survey had positive comments about the Coalition and felt they would be good stewards of implementation. At the same time, most organizations we spoke with who are not partners of the Coalition and/or represent traditionally underrepresented populations, had little to no familiarity with the Coalition.

- Overall themes about community organizations who are not partners with the RBCEC:
 - Most have a specific focus, be it race, ethnicity, culture, faith or mission.
 - Lack connection with one another and city.
 - Almost all have very limited capacity and feel the need for more support.
 - Many were not familiar with the RBCEC and a few found it difficult to access.
 - Importance of faith based organizations was apparent.
- Overall themes from organizations representing refugee & immigrant communities?
 - Recognize the unique needs of being refugees or immigrants, in addition to culturally-based identities.
 - Same people are tapped to participate in multiple issues and processes – can get burned out.
 - Disconnects arise due to different styles of communication, feeling lip service is paid, feedback is ignored, etc.
 - Groups feel it is difficult to “break into mainstream” groups and vice versa.
 - Most groups were very supportive of the idea of a multi-cultural center.
 - Rainier Beach Community Center is seen as too “mainstream.”
 - Next Step: need a shared conversation
- Thoughts for Moving Forward
 - There is an opportunity to build a stronger, more cohesive community voice.
 - Need to have a shared vision. Plan update should provide the shared vision.
 - To be effective in driving the plan implementation, a neighborhood organizational structure needs to add value, be accessible and able to bridge across cultures, bring people together while responding to diverse communities, and give attention to building organizational capacity to do the work.

Effective Organizations/Collaborations *(Murray)*

- How to create collaborative structure around plan implementation. Organizational Collaboration can be defined as many different things; not always the most efficient or best way to deliver programs or services.
 - Good for working together on a long-term common goal.

- Can bring credibility.
- Can create a forum for bringing people together to share perspectives.
- Eliminates silos. Can bring together large and grassroots organizations.
- Variety of structures that can be created: cooperation, coordination, collaboration. Process of creating the structure matters as well.
- NAC will need to decide on what will work best for Rainier Beach, but should follow best practices as much as possible.
 - Must address self-interests of individual groups in larger work.
 - Must have ability to compromise and accept group decisions.
 - Group must take ownership over process and outcome of the work.
 - Groups may be involved at different levels of participation.
 - Flexibility and adaptability are essential.
 - Must consider pace of the work.
 - Make sure the purpose is shared by everyone involved.
 - Need to have the resources for the job. Dedicated staff time helps ensure success. Skill set of leadership is also important.

Comments/questions

- NAC member asked how focus on Rainier Beach Coalition and survey questions came about. Was NAC included?
Trang stated NAC sub-group and City reviewed questions and suggested the Coalition. Coalition model was offered as a starting point, but not presented as a foregone conclusion.
- There were comments around reaching all segments of the community. Impossible to reach everyone; some people are distrustful of government.
- NAC member stated the structure is not very conducive to community involvement outside of the open houses.
- NAC member commented she felt the Rainier Empowerment Coalition could do the work, but would need the resources. Felt community/organizations need to step up and participate – not all about self interest, about best interest of the community.
- How to convince organizations that collaborative work benefits them?
 - Some organizations are more collaborative than others. Not everyone will want to come to the table.
 - It takes time and resources to form a successful collaboration.
- How do we discourage groups from joining, if we don't want them involved?
 - Need to set clear criteria/process, etc. to remove groups that don't live up to expectations.
- NAC is going to need time to consider all of this information before making decision.

Wrap Up

- There will be a NAC subcommittee meeting Monday to begin discussion with funders around criteria.
- Need to discuss January agenda via e-mail.